

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SCCT-01 SY-04 OPR-01 A-01

OC-05 CCO-00 USSS-00 /063 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 7165

INFO SECDEF IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 720

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, GR, US

SUBJECT: PORT VISIT TO CURFU CANCELLED BY DEMONSTRATORS

1. PORT VISIT TO CORFU BY USS BYRD, SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 17-31, WAS CANCELLED JANUARY 27 AT REQUEST OF GOG, TO WHICH EMBASSY ACCEDED. BYRD VISIT WOULD HAVE BEEN FIRST SUCH VISIT BY NON-HOMEPORTED US NAVY UNIT SINCE PRIOR TO ERUPTION OF CYPRUS CRISIS IN JULY 1974. IT FOLLOWED TWO EARLIER DENIALS BY GOG OF REQUEST PORT VISITS, ONE FOR ELEFISIS (BY A NON-HOMEPORTED UNIT) IN OCTOBER 1974 AND ONE FOR PATRAS IN DECEMBER 1974.

2. AS REPORTED BY GOG AND PRESS, GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS GATHERED ON CORFU WATERFRONT JAN 27 WITH OBJECTIVE OF DENYING CREW OF BYRD ABILITY TO COME ASHORE. TWO OFFICERS FROM BYRD, WHO REPORTED TO HAVE COME IN TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOURS, ETC. WERE UNABLE TO GET OFF LANDING AND HAD TO RETURN TO SHIP. DEMONSTRATORS THREATENED ACTION AGAINST SHIP IF IT HAD NOT DEPARTED BY 1700. ALUSNA WAS CALLED TO HELLENIC NAVAL HEADQUARTERS AND INFORMED OF
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SITUATION AS WELL AS OF REQUEST BY DEFMIN AVEROFF, AFTER

CONSULTATION WITH PM CARAMANLIS, THE USS BYRD DEPARTED CORFU.

3. LATER REPORTS INDICATE THAT DEMONSTRATORS INCREASED TO 10,000 AND THE 60 YEAR OLD GREEK MAN, WHO WAS INJURED EARLIER IN DAY HAD DIED. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THE ORGANIZERS OF DEMONSTRATION HAD SENT MESSAGE TO GOG STATING THAT DEMONSTRATION HELD IN PROTEST AGAINST "THE ANTI-GREEK POLICY OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION, AND NOT AGAINST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

4. COMMENT. "ORGANIZERS OF DEMONSTRATION" EVIDENTLY HAD DONE THEIR WORK WELL BEFOREHAND AND ARE MOST LIKELY FROM LEFT OF GREEK POLITICAL SPECTRUM, WITH PASOK AS THE LEADING SUSPECT. WE HAD HOPED WITH COOPERATION OF US NAVY COMMANDS GRADUALLY TO RESUME PORT VISITS IN GREECE FOLLOWING HIATUS OF SIX MONTHS CREATED BY CYPRUS CRISIS AND REACTION TO IT IN GREECE.

5. UNDER MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER LAMBRIAS HAS INFORMED PAO THAT HE WILL GIVE PRESS BRIEFING THIS EVENING (JAN. 27) AND WILL ATTEMPT TO "PUT MATTER IN PERSPECTIVE." HE IMPLIED THIS WAS AT CARAMANLIS' REQUEST AND SUGGESTED THAT EMBASSY MEANWHILE REFRAIN FROM COMMENT. PAO ADVISED LAMBRIAS THT IN RESPONSE TO QUERY FROM AP HE HAD ALREADY CONFIRMED THAT BYRD VISIT CANCELLED "AT REQUEST OF GOG." LAMBRIAS ACCEPTED THIS BUT REPEATED THAT HE WOULD EXPRESS GOG VIEWS TONIGHT. HE COMMENTED THAT PRIME MINISTER WAS CONCERNED ABOUT TENDENCY OF SOME SEGMENTS OF GREEK PUBLIC TO BLAME USG INDISCRIMINATELY FOR GREEK REVERSES AND WANTED TO CALM ATMOSPHERE SO THAT EPISODES LIKE CORFIOTE REACTION TO BYRD VISIT DID NOT RECUR.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ANTIAMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS, USS BYRD
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS00720
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750029-0947
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750119/aaaaaqmk.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PORT VISIT TO CURFU CANCELLED BY DEMONSTRATORS
TAGS: MPOL, OCLR, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006